Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Is it laid down that the presence of the President is absolutely necessary for all meetings?

President.—No.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—We have only a preliminary meeting. We could have done it earlier, especially when it is mentioned that the Committee should submit its report as early as possible. I think that there is no sufficient reason for this delay

Mr. T. K. Krishna Menon.—I think no discussion can be permitted on this point.

President.—Of course, the Excise Superintendent said that he wished that the President should be present at the first meeting. But the Proceedings does not show that. So the matter ends.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—For the ensuing meeting, is it necessary that the President should be present?

President.—May not be necessary; but it is desirable to have the President.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—I desire to point out that the Committee is not doing the work which is entrusted to it.

President.—It is a matter of inference.

The unrestricted sale of liquor in the State.

113. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Government be pleased to state the reason for not allowing the common or unrestricted sale of liquor in the State and the steps taken by the Government for restricting the sale of liquor in the State, and whether, as a result of such steps, the consumption of liquor in the State has increased in the last decade, and if so, what is the increase?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—If, by common or unrestricted sale, the farming system is meant, the system was not continued, because the Government wanted to minimise the drinking habit and to bring it under control. The steps taken for restricting the sale of liquor are:—

(1) the introduction of the independent shop system;

(2) the establishment of a Central Distillery at Trichur;

(3) the restriction in the number and location of shops;

(4) the imposition of duty on liquor and of tax on tapping trees and the gradual enhancement thereof;

(5) restrictions as to the hours of sale and persons to whom liquor can be sold;

(6) the reduction in the strength of liquor and other restrictions to prevent fraud.

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The increase or decrease in the consumption of liquor can be seen from the figures furnished in reply to question No. 61 of the legislative session.

The number of liquor shops in the State.

114. Mr. K. T. Mathew.— Will the Government be pleased to inform the number of (a) toddy, (b) arrack and (c) foreign liquor shops in the State in 1101 and the number of such shops for which licenses will be given for the year 1102?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—

	Toddy.	Arrack.	Foreign liquor.
1101	452	251	44
1102	441	241	The number cannot be specified now. It will not be more than this year's.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will it be less, if you are working at Prohibition? There is no use of giving a guarantee that it will not be more.

President.—The number is less. Then, about foreign liquor shops, how is the number ascertained?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—When applications are received.

President.—Therefore, applications are received?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—I receive applications by the end of this month, and they are for the ensuing year.

President.—How many were received till now?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—I do not remember exactly Perhaps, there may be two or three.

President.—It will not be more than that for this year. Is there any reason to think that it would be less?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—I cannot say.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—What is the objection in reducing the number of shops? We are working up to Prohibition.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—We do not find any reason for reducing these shops. Liquor is not consumed in all these shops. Foreign liquor shops consist of wholesale shops, retail shops, taverns, shops for rectified spirits, shops for medicated wines, etc. All these together come to only 44. So far as taverns are concerned, there are only four. They have been auctioned for next year, and their number will be the same as that of last year.

President.—The question asked is whether, keeping this policy steadily in view, the shops could be gradually reduced so

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